(c) whether Government have formulated any norms for such universities and institutions and whether their degrees are recognized in the country;

(d) whether such institutions offer fellowships and other facilities to our students; and

(e) whether Government have formulated any advisory for our students in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (e) While the Central Government has not taken a final view in regard to the entry of foreign education providers, a draft Bill containing the provisions to regulate the entry and operations of foreign education providers was circulated to State Governments and various stakeholders seeking their opinion on the Bill. The Government intends to put a regulatory framework on foreign education providers at the earliest possible.

Advertisements from certain foreign institutions for admission to technical and professional courses have come to the notice of the Government. In order to ensure that quality of education is not adversely affected, the revised 'Regulations for entry and operation of foreign universities/institutions imparting technical education in India' have been notified on May 27, 2005 by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). Accreditation of foreign university/institution by authorized agency in the home country is one of the conditions for registration. The Regulation provides for criteria to be laid down by the Standing Committee of AICTE on equivalence of qualifications such as degrees/diplomas. While the Regulation provides for infrastructure and other academic facilities, there is no provision for fellowships for students under it.

The AICTE has released public information in respect of approved institutions, both domestic or otherwise.

Punishment to rapists

*70. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that law provides punishment for the proven guilt of rape "a minimum of 7 years imprisonment" still many courts have

either awarded lesser years of imprisonment and High Courts have even reduced the sentences in such cases; and

(b) if so, whether Government would ensure that maximum punishment, as provided in the law, be awarded in proven cases to deter the prospective perpetrators of this heinous crime?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Section 376 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) prescribes a punishment of a minimum period of seven years of imprisonment and a maximum punishment of life imprisonment for the offence of rape. However, in a few serious cases of rapes like rape of a girl below 12 years of age and custodial rape, the minimum punishment could be 10 years. As per proviso to the above Section, the court may, for adequate and special reasons to be mentioned in the judgement, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term less than seven years.

(b) As the judiciary is independent, it is not possible for the Government to interfere in the functioning of the judiciary.

Centres for Certificate Authentication

*71. SHRI T. T. V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the locations of the centres where authentication of certificates of educational qualifications for the persons seeking employment in Arabian countries is being done in the country;

(b) whether Government are aware of the hardships faced by the persons coming from distant places to New Delhi for this purpose; and

(c) whether Government would open more authentication centres in the country to save the job seekers from the ordeal of long travel?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) Authentication of Educational Certificates is being done at New Delhi by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. In addition, in view of the hardship faced by people coming from distant places to New Delhi for authentication, the following fourteen State Governments have also been authorized to authenticate educational